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2014 Washtenaw County Candidates Survey Response

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Office Candidate Seeks: State Senator

District/Ward: District 22

Candidate's Full Name: Shari Pollesch

Party Affiliation (if applicable): Democrat

Candidate's E-mail Address: shari@voteforshari.com

Office Candidate Seeks: State Senator

District/Ward: District 22

Party Affiliation (if applicable): Democrat

Campaign Website: www.voteforshari.com

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1. In regards to arts, culture and heritage, do you consider yourself any of the following:

I believe that availability and access to arts, cultural and heritage offerings in our community make our community a great place to create, live, work, play, learn and visit.

I am a consumer of arts, culture and/or heritage products and programs.

2. What arts, cultural or heritage activities have you and/or your family members attended, participated in or supported in the past year?

I am a 20+ member of the Livingston County Concert Band and have been on and off its Board of Directors for most of that period. My Mother and I enjoy attending live theater at venues like the Purple Rose Theater and the Fisher. I am occasionally able to attend the DSO's annual performance at Kensington State Park.

3. Thinking back to your own K-12 education, what arts or cultural classes, programs or activities did you participate in? In what way, if any, do you believe your participation influenced or still influences you?

From 4th grade through college, I played in a concert band. I was also very involved in theater doing behind the scenes jobs like lighting, costumes and did perform in one musical as a high school senior. In college, I was the Student Director for a performance of "Guys and Dolls." These experiences enabled me to stay in touch with my creative energy and I believe help me in writing and oral presentations as an attorney.

4. What role do you think arts, culture, and the creative sector can play in supporting key education priorities such as closing the achievement gap, reducing the dropout rate, and preparing more students for college enrollment and the 21st century workforce?

A critical role....particularly in keeping at risk kids tuned into school. I had many peers that would have dropped out of high school were it not for the creative energy they were able to spend on theater and other performance arts. I believe that creative arts are under valued in classrooms. I see them as a critical way for everyone to discover and hone their gifts, even if those gifts are not primarily played out in the creative sector.

5. What role can arts, culture, and the creative sector play in Washtenaw's economic growth and vitality?

Washtenaw county already has such a vibrant creative sector through the universities, through community based gems like the Purple Rose, through various art shows. I have no doubt that these activities and venues create economic growth and vitality. The job I would have as a legislature is to make sure that this sector is protected and supported so that it can grow.

6. Do you support public investment in the creative economy? This includes arts, culture, heritage organizations and creative individuals.

Yes

Please explain your answer:

I would support a creative arts millage to support the creative economy and we have discussed this as a Board for my community band. We provide such a rich opportunity for the community to enjoy culture at a meager cost but the constant worry about raising funds takes energy that could be directed to more performances.

7. If elected, what measureable action(s) will you take during your term to support public investment in our community's creative economy and support arts, culture, heritage organizations and businesses and creative individuals?

I need to study the need more thoroughly but I would have supported any Detroit plan that saved the DIA and protected the Arts for the city and for all of Michigan.

8. What is your position on public funding for arts and culture and, if elected, how will your position be reflected during the budget/planning process?

I would advocate to restore funding for the arts and culture and, particularly, for fully funded arts in all public schools. We are selling our children short by not robustly funding opportunities for learning in the creative arts in schools.

9. If you support public funding for arts and culture, what do you think are the best means of allocating funds?

Appropriations distributed via grant programs

Tax based (millages, accommodations, sales etc.)

I'm unsure about the "percent for Art/Culture" choice. If we currently allocate to the arts and culture on a line item basis, i would certainly support going forward. If we are not, I would support it in the future after we are properly funding our infrastructure needs, public schools and environmental protection.

10. If elected, would you accept an invitation to become a member in an arts, culture and heritage caucus?

Yes

If yes, from which caucus would you accept an invitation?

Washtenaw County Caucus